

CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for facilitating communication between a watched party and a watching party over a multiple access network where the watching party wishes to contact the watched party and the watching party uses a first type of device on a first type of access network and the watched party uses a second type of device on a second type of access network comprising:

storing, on a personal communications portal device, a plurality of contact addresses for said watched party in a common location which is accessible via said multiple access network, each contact address being associated with corresponding ones of a plurality of different types of devices;

receiving a request from a watching party via a first type of access device on the first access network to contact said watched party, wherein said request includes an indication of a contact address associated with a watched party access device of the first type;

directing the request to the personal communications portal device having access to the stored contact addresses;

determining, by the personal communications portal device, presence information for the watched party including identifying which of said different devices are in active communication with the multiple access network;

selecting, by the personal communications portal device, one of the plurality of contact addresses associated with at least one device identified as being in active communication with the multiple access network and being of a different type than the watching party device operating in response to a watched party defined contact rule, the watched party defined contact rule associating watched party presence and user preferences with each of the plurality of contact addresses;

determining whether to permit the watching party to contact the watched party based at least in-part on which type of device is the active device and identity of the watching party; and

if it is determined to permit the watching party to contact the watched party, prompting, by the personal communications portal device, redirection of communications between the first type of device associated with the first access network and used by the watching party to the second type of device associated with the second access network and used by the watched party

by forwarding the selected contact address to the watching party to enable the watching party to contact the watched party at the selected contact address in response to the watched party contact rules, whereby quickly contacting the watched party may be facilitated and controlled, and personal mobility is supported.

2. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

providing, by the personal communications portal device, the selected contact address and a description of the device associated with the selected contact address to the watching party.

3. (cancelled)

4. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

determining that said watched party is accessible via a plurality of devices;
contacting said watched party via at least one of said plurality of devices based upon said set of watched party defined contact rules.

5. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 4 further comprising:

providing the selected contact address and a description of the device associated with the selected contact address to the watching party.

6. (cancelled)

7. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 5 further comprising:

providing the selected contact address and a respective description of each of said plurality of devices to said watching party.

8. (cancelled)

9. (original) The method according to Claim 2 further comprising determining a contextual situation of a watched party and providing a description of said contextual situation to said watching party.

10. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

receiving a contact identifier associated with the plurality of contact addresses and converting said contact identifier into at least one of said plurality of contact addresses.

11. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising receiving a contact identifier associated with the plurality of contact addresses and converting said contact identifier into a plurality of said plurality of contact addresses.

12. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1 further comprising:

controlling access to said determination that said watched party has access to said multiple access network via said at least one device based upon said watched party defined contact rules.

13. (currently amended) Apparatus operable to facilitate communication between a watched party and a watching party over a multiple access network where the watching party wishes to contact the watched party and the watching party uses a first type of device on a first type of access network and the watched party uses a second type of device on a second type of access network comprising:

a personal communications portal device comprising:

a processor and memory coupled to said multiple access network, wherein said memory is configured to store contact information for contacting said watched party via a plurality of different types of devices associated with different access networks, the contact information including a plurality of different contact numbers, each corresponding to ones of a plurality of different types of devices wherein each type of device is associated with a particular access network; and

at least one watched party defined contact rule stored in said memory, the watched party defined contact rule associating watched party presence and user preferences with each of the plurality of contact numbers; and

a plurality of gateways coupled between said personal communications portal device and said plurality of access networks, wherein said plurality of gateways are configured to provide said personal communications portal device with information pertaining to a presence of said watched party on said plurality of access networks, including which of the devices is currently in active communication with at least one of the access networks,

wherein said processor is operable in response to a request from a watching party to contact said watched party via a first type of device on the first access network, wherein said request includes an indication of a contact address associated with a watched party device of the first type, to select one of the contact addresses associated with a device in active communication with at least one of the access networks in accordance with contact rules such that the selected watched party device is of a different type than the watching party device;

wherein said processor is operable to determine whether to permit the watching party to contact the watched party based at least in-part on which type of device is the active device and identity of the watching party; and

wherein, if it is determined to permit the watching party to contact the watched party, said processor prompts redirection of communications between a first access network used by the watching party and a second, different access network used by the device associated with the selected contact address such that the watched party receives the communications on a different type of device than the watching party employs to transmit the communications, thereby facilitating personal mobility.

14. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 13 further comprising a plurality of watched party defined contact rules stored in said memory.

15. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one destination address of said watching party for contacting said watched party via at least one of said access networks.

16. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 13 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one device type for contacting said watching party.

17. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 16 wherein:

said device type is selected from the group consisting of telephone, facsimile, pager, e-mail system, and video conference system.

18. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 15 wherein:

said subset of said contact information comprises a contact identifier which is convertible by said processor into at least one contact address for said watched party.

19. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 18 wherein said contact identifier comprises a telephone number.

20. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 18 wherein said contact identifier comprises a data network address.

21. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 13 wherein said processor is configured to limit access to a watching party to at least one set of contact information based upon said at least one watched party defined contact rule.

22. (currently amended) Apparatus operable to facilitate communication between a watched party and a watching party over a multiple access network where the watching party wishes to contact the watched party and the watching party uses a first type of device on a first type of access network and the watched party uses a second type of device on a second type of access network, comprising:

means for processing and storing data, coupled to said multiple access network, operable for storing contact information for contacting said watched party via a plurality of different types

of devices, each associated with a particular type of access network, the contact information including a plurality of contact addresses associated with the plurality of devices;

means for generating at least one contact rule stored in said data storing means, the contact rule associating watched party presence and user preferences with each of the plurality of contact numbers;

gateway means coupled between said processor means and said plurality of access networks for providing said processing means with information pertaining to a presence of said watched party on said plurality of access networks, including which of the devices is in active communication with at least one of said access networks; and,

wherein said processing means is further configured to provide one of the plurality of contact addresses to a watching party seeking access to the watched party in response to a watching party request and the watched party defined contact rules such that the provided contact address is associated with a watched party device that is of a different type than the watching party device;

wherein said processing means is further configured to determine whether to permit the watching party to contact the watched party based at least in-part on which type of device is the active device and identity of the watching party; and

wherein, if it is determined to permit the watching party to contact the watched party, said processing means prompts redirection of communications between a first access network used by the watching party and a second, different access network used by the device associated with the selected address such that the watched party receives the communications on a different type of device than the watching party employs to transmit the communications,

thereby facilitating personal mobility.

23. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 22 further comprising:

a plurality of watched party defined contact rules stored in said storing means.

24. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 22 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one destination address of said watching party for contacting said watched party via at least one of said access networks.

25. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 22 wherein:

said contact information includes at least one device type for contacting said watching party.

26. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 25 wherein:

said device type is selected from the group consisting of telephone, facsimile, pager, e-mail system, and video conference system.

27. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 22 wherein:

a subset of said contact information comprises a contact identifier which is convertible by said processor means into at least one contact address for said watched party.

28. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein:

said contact identifier comprises a telephone number.

29. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 27 wherein:

said contact identifier comprises a data network address.

30. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 22 wherein said processor means is configured to limit access to a watching party to at least one set of contact information based upon said at least one watched party defined contact rule.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, automatically determining a location of said watched party.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the location of said watched party is automatically determined based at least in part on recent use of said at least one device.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the location of said watched party is automatically determined based at least in part on recent use of said at least one device.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein at least one of said plurality of contact addresses is associated with said at least one device.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of selecting one of said contact addresses based at least in part on said set of watched party defined contact rules.

36. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of selecting a contact address associated with a device, that is not at the automatically determined location of the watched party.

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of selecting a contact address associated with a device that is at the automatically determined location of the watched party.

38. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, determining a location of said watched party based on a plurality of sources.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the plurality of sources comprises the at least one device that said watched party uses to access said multiple access network.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 39, further comprising

prior to contacting said watched party, accessing a stored information about said watched party in the at least one device.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 40, further comprising

prior to contacting said watched party, determining the location of said watched party based on the stored information in the at least one device.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising

prior to contacting said watched party, accessing a location information of said watched party in the watched party defined contact rules.

43. (previously presented) The method of claim 42, further comprising:

prior to contacting said watched party, determining a location of said watched party based on the location information found in the watched party defined contact rules.